"Truth Is One, Men Call It By Various Names."
—Rig Veda

VEDANTA QUARTERLY

Message of the East

WINTER 1960

SALVATION AND MUKTI

Single Copies 75c $3.00 A Year

Volume XLIX Number 4

CONTENTS

But I Say unto You.....*by Kahlil Gibran*
Kinship of Ideals.....*Various Sources*
Salvation and Mukti.....*by Srimati Gayatri Devi*
Like a Child.....*from the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*
The Path of the Spirit.....*by Swami Paramananda*
Life's Eternal Song.....*by Sister Daya*
Wisdom of Holy Mother
Philosophy of Schweitzer.....*by Swami Parampanthi*
From an Indian Journey.....*by Astrid S. Angstrom*
Jesus and Nanak.....*by Charles S. Braden*
Calendar of Events
An Important Announcement!

VEDANTA QUARTERLY
MESSAGE OF THE EAST
Issued by
THE VEDANTA CENTRE
130 Beechwood St., Cohasset, Massachusetts

THE ANANDA ASHRAMA
5301 Pennsylvania Ave.
Mailing Address: P. O. Box 577
La Crescenta, California

All of Swami Paramananda's works and other Vedanta literature, as well as the publication, *Message of the East,* may be obtained directly from Vedanta Centre, 130 Beechwood St., Cohasset, Mass., and from Ananda Ashrama, Box 577, La Crescenta, Calif.

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY AT 5301 PENNSYLVANIA AVE., LA CRESCENTA, CALIFORNIA
MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 577, LA CRESCENTA, CALIFORNIA
ENTERED AS SECOND CLASS MATTER AT POST OFFICE AT LA CRESCENTA, CALIFORNIA
COPYRIGHT BY THE VEDANTA CENTRE, INC., 1960

Message of the East

"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."
—*Ezekiel*
"Light shall come again from the East."
—*Tyndall*

VOLUME XLIX 1960 NUMBER 4

BUT I SAY UNTO YOU

*by Kahlil Gibran**

When Jesus spoke the whole world was hushed to listen. His words were not for our ears but rather for the elements of which God made this earth.

He spoke to the sea, our vast mother that gave us birth. He spoke to the mountain, our elder brother whose summit is a promise.

And He spoke to the angels beyond the sea and the mountain to whom we entrusted our dreams ere the clay in us was made hard in the sun.

And still His speech slumbers within our breast like a love-song half forgotten, and sometimes it burns itself through to our memory.

His speech was simple and joyous, and the sound of His voice was like cool water in a land of drought.

Once He raised His hand against the sky, and His fingers were like the branches of a sycamore tree; and He said with a great voice:

"The prophets of old have spoken to you, and your ears are filled with their speech. But I say unto you, empty your ears of what you have heard."

* From *Jesus, the Son of Man,* published by Alfred A. Knopf, New York.

And these words of Jesus, "But I say unto you," were not uttered by a man of our race nor of our world; but rather by a host of seraphim marching across the sky of Judea.

Again and yet again He would quote the law and the prophets, and then He would say, "But I say unto you."

Oh what burning words, what waves of seas unknown to the shores of our mind, "But I say unto you."

What stars seeking the darkness of the soul, and what sleepless souls awaiting the dawn.

KINSHIP OF IDEALS

There is an experience of the Eternal breaking into time, which transforms all life into a miracle of faith and action. —*Thomas Kelly*

It is so easy a matter: it is not much He asks, only a little remembrance now and again which gradually leads to the giving of the whole heart.
—*St. Teresa*

When the soul so lives in its own secret place that it is the image of God, then it has true unity that no creature can divide. God, the angels, and creatures to the contrary notwithstanding, nothing can separate this soul from the image of God. This is true unity, and true blessedness depends on it. —*Meister Eckhart*

There is little fear that a ship will drift or run into danger as long as its compass points due North. So the ship of life steers clear of every danger, if the mind, its compass needle, is always turned towards God without oscillation.
—*Sri Ramakrishna*

SALVATION AND MUKTI

by Srimati Gayatri Devi

The concept of salvation is far more closely related to the teachings of Christianity than to the Oriental philosophies. When we study the theology that has been developed based upon the teachings of Christ, we recognize that Christ's very advent is concerned with the idea of salvation. He came into the world to save. This was his mission in life. And as we consider it, we come to see that salvation presupposes certain conditions. If we are to be saved, if someone is to save us, we ask the question, what is it from which we need to be saved? The answer is given to us (and I speak here purely in the light of my understanding of Christianity) that man, being born of sin and iniquity — these being the conditions into which he is plunged — has need of being saved; he *must* be saved!

Let me now compare this idea with the other part of our subject, *mukti,* or liberation. The concept of liberation is inherent in the philosophy of Vedanta and is, in fact, spoken of as man's goal — his very objective in human life. Here, too, we have to ask the question: If man seeks liberation, if he considers liberation as his ultimate objective, is he not in bondage? Does not liberation presuppose bondage? The answer is in the affirmative. As the idea is developed in Vedanta, the supposition is this: The human soul is caught in the meshes of ignorance and

bondage; and finding itself in this state, it seeks to free itself.

There is one passage in the Bhagavad-Gita which throws some light on that which we are discussing. Sri Krishna, who represents the voice of the Supreme speaking through the personal teacher, says that all creatures at birth fall into delusion, caused by the pairs of opposites. The pairs of opposites are the inevitables in life. Many of us have not developed our thinking along philosophical lines enough to be able to recognize that our very existence operates through this duality spoken of as the "pairs of opposites." We cannot have light without darkness. We cannot have pleasure without pain, success without failure. We can never find, in any plane of phenomenon, the positive which is not equated by the negative. And this philosophic fact is also a scientific and material fact. Our very existence is caught, as it were, between these two poles. Everything in life operates through twofold expression. Vedanta says that the soul — man's true being, his essential substance, his primal and final existence — is caught in these dual conditions, but is not one with them. And it is soul that seeks liberation from duality.

We consider soul as immortal, indestructible, everlasting, impenetrable. We speak of it as being independent, deathless, changeless, birthless, beyond all dualities. And yet, when we think of that soul as something within ourselves, and our being related to it, we find that

all the attributes of the soul and our knowledge of such, do not make us independent, free, changeless, deathless, birthless, beginningless, timeless. You see, this is the point that we need to understand for ourselves if we are to comprehend what is meant by liberation. One basic instinct in all creatures is the instinct for freedom. We like to be free, because we *are* free. Yet we find ourselves over and over again in conditions of bondage. Our original, primary state, and our final state, nevertheless is the free state. That is why we seek freedom in all spheres of our life. Freedom is as important to us as a breath of air. We cannot live without air, and we cannot live without freedom. Having discovered this for ourselves, we are ever trying to gain a condition of freedom. Do you realize that all man's discoveries, his inventions, his search and investigation in every field of science — coming forth with more abundant secrets of nature — are related to this love of freedom? And man knows within himself that the greater discoveries he can make, the freer he will be, and he will gain conquest and mastery over forces that give him the sense of bondage. What I am trying to point out is that man's accomplishments are ever endowing him with greater freedom — of a certain type. But the freedom of which our philosophy speaks is the most important. It is to become aware of our real existence.

India's earliest sacred books speak of the soul trying to gain freedom from death. This, too, is an instinct. We read the story of Nachiketas in

the Katha Upanishad. He comes to his teacher to ask one question. One secret he wants to know: What lies beyond death; and how can he be free from death? That is the secret of all secrets. You ask, "Has anyone gained this freedom?" "No," you say, "not even Christ." But then you think, "Well, he did not really die; he still is." If, nurtured by your own traditional Christianity, you believe that Christ is immortal, by the same token, you have to believe that you too are immortal. Here is the idea that we should make very clear. We create the distinction between ourselves and those whom we call world saviours. But if they are immortal and everlasting in their state of existence, so is man. The difference is that man does not know it. So every man must discover this. It is in the teaching of Christ: "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth will make you free." And Vedanta claims that as soon as man knows the truth, he becomes the liberated spirit.

If Christ was free, it is because he had known the truth. And what is this truth that man must know? What he is; what the nature of his own being is. He is to free himself of false knowledge, of ignorance or delusion. Liberation means freedom from the round of birth and death; freedom from ignorance, from delusion; freedom from the false notion that we die; freedom from the erroneous thinking that we are mortals. We can name them one by one — all the elements that constitute ignorance and bondage. And to be free of all that is to be liberated.

Now, we ask what connection has this with salvation? Every connection. If we compare it with the Christian line of thinking, the difference will be shown. In Christianity it is pointed out that to gain freedom, you must be saved by the hand of the personal God, Jesus. Christianity is really dualistic in its philosophy. The moment it directs our attention to Christ as the saviour of man, it ceases to be monistic. This is a logical conclusion which we come to by pure and simple thinking. When we accept a personal approach to God, we cannot but employ a dualistic philosophy. We are told, "If you want to be saved, then it is Jesus who will save you; you must belong to him and take refuge in him." And in the light of the older philosophies, such as Vedanta, there is nothing wrong with this belief.

Certainly the personal saviour has his place in the whole of religion and most tangibly in the life of the man who practices religion in seeking salvation. It is also true that such a man can have salvation. And if we think that salvation is the same as liberation, then the personal saviour is of paramount importance.

Salvation and liberation are not contradictory. Only one approach is dualistic, while the other is monistic. Vedanta claims man is a soul, and as a soul, he comes into life through bondage. That is the maya, or nature, or the law of relative existence which causes bondage. Maya is the inscrutible power of the Absolute, from which the soul has to free itself, and it can

rightly do so. Do you mark the difference? One concept is that you free yourself, the other that someone will free you.

The dualistic approach to this problem is given a place within the framework of the Vedanta philosophy. There are any number of people in India who seek and accept salvation as the soul's primary goal and objective. They follow the same dualistic path as the Christians, taking refuge in a personal saviour. In the Bhagavad-Gita, the New Testament of the Hindus, the Lord, himself, proclaims, "Take refuge in Him with all thy heart. Through His grace thou shalt attain supreme peace and the eternal abode." Christ says, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." Is there any conflict or difference between the teaching of the two religions? It is the individual who, according to his understanding, will follow the path by which he can best gain that for which he aspires.

Here let me ask who is longing for liberation? Few there are who have even begun to think in terms of liberation. Many want salvation because salvation has a special meaning for them. Man is frightened by his own sense of iniquity, because it will involve him in suffering and pain and all kinds of undesirable experiences. Frequently his desire for salvation springs from his rejection of all that he would like to avoid. This, of course, could be considered a cowardly approach. At the same time, who wants the humiliation of thinking that he is a

coward? However, even if we are cowardly, it is merely due to our lack of true estimation of ourselves. And this is exactly what Vedanta makes clear. Its practices help to free us from the weight of fear or cowardice.

We are stimulated and feel exalted over and over when we read the writings of Vivekananda. He calls aloud: "Tell yourself that you are free! Know that you are free! Do not bind yourself to this false notion that you are sinful and weak. Do not accept yourselves as mortals!" He cries out again and again, "The truth is that you are already free and the very knowledge of it will shatter your bondage." If a soul could convince himself of this powerful truth, he would immediately become free. This would also be his salvation. Freedom is true salvation. He does not need the other kind, which makes him feel comfortable and secure behind the walls of his hidden fears and within the bounds of his material existence. Because we are so ignorant, we think that our security and protection lie in being well padded by everything that is material. How easily we forget that material existence is perishable! We do not want to die, but we are going to die just the same. This simply means that our body will die. We do not want to be ill, we do not want to suffer pain, but we will certainly have to face sickness and sorrow during a lifetime. When these come, why do we not say to ourselves, "I do not suffer! I am not truly ill! It is only my body that is afflicted, because it is subject to nature; this is the perishable part of my existence."

Vedanta calls such reasoning discrimination. It is this discrimination that we have to cultivate in degrees, little by little, until it leads us to perfect knowledge. At first we receive this knowledge theoretically, but we trust it because it is the experience of those who have conquered death, sickness and pain, and have thus become immortal. Yes, in dying they have reached immortality, because they realized the truth while within the confines of their earthly existence. This is liberation; and this is also salvation in the truest sense, because the soul can only be saved when freed from the bondage of ignorance.

In Vedanta there is no concept of eternal damnation. The soul cannot be doomed forever because of its misdeeds or errors. The idea that through his own fault man is born into sin and iniquity does not exist. The Hindu doctrine of karma however explains the reason for his suffering, struggle and sorrow which he can terminate by experiencing them. When he has known the truth and transcended his mortal limitations, he has found salvation, freedom from delusion, and become liberated. We must think of it as being our birthright. No one will prepare for us a place wherein we may dwell happily throughout eternity. Neither do we need, in one sense, anyone outside ourself to take us there. We find and make our rightful place in the life beyond according to our own spiritual development. If a personal saviour plays his part in our life, he can only do so because he is also the Saviour

within; He is the God who dwells in us. And it is He who works with and through us.

Perhaps there is not much comfort in this type of bold, ruthless philosophy, which tells us to throw overboard all fears. Yet by its very boldness it proclaims man's intrinsic worth. If we continue to think that we are weak, we shall remain weak; if we accept that we are bound, we shall always be bound. On the other hand, if we have even an inkling of the knowledge that although we are at present in a bound state, we possess within us the power to free ourselves, this will give us courage and perseverance to work toward our liberation.

What we have to realize is that we ourselves must do our part. Religion cannot be accepted merely at a superficial level in our lives. If we seek freedom, if we want enlightenment, if we desire to know the truth, then we have no alternative but to do that by which all these may be gained. The method is simple in theory only, but most difficult in practice. Liberation cannot be achieved easily, and every soul must face this. In fact, most souls so enjoy being bound, that they readily forget about liberation. This is the state of the majority of human beings. We say to ourselves, "Why must we have liberation? We are perfectly contented." Is it true that you are really contented? When pain strikes you, when difficulties and problems beset you, are you still contented? No. But liberation means just that: first being unaffected by that which you do not want, and then going beyond

it. You gain conquest over affliction, over everything. That is the real freedom. That is mukti. And mukti is man's knowledge of himself, the realization of his transcendant nature and the attainment of his divine status. And here I repeat, mukti is salvation in the truest sense, in its essential meaning. By attaining mukti you know that you and your saviour are one, just as Christ knew and proclaimed, "I and my father are one." No line can be drawn to separate the two. They are one and the same. It is this oneness with the higher Self, the God within, that you gain in your liberated state.

The next question is, "How may we achieve it?" The answer is given: "Practice discrimination between what is real and what is unreal. Practice it. That is the important part in your everyday life." Whether a Vedantist or a Christian, as long as you have entered upon a path you cannot escape practice in accordance with your chosen faith.

Many years ago, when in Italy, I visited a monastery and was told that Saint Francis had stayed there. In a dark cell, on a small pedestal there rested a human skull. Now, we see human skulls in museums and in classrooms; but what relation has the human skull to religious life? I was told that this was the skull upon which Saint Francis had meditated. What does this meditation on death mean? It is found in every religion. This is a practice in discrimination—to face reality in our plane of existence, and to know That which is beyond it. It is by no means

morbid; rather, it is to bring home to man the fact that one part of his existence is perishable. He must live in the imperishable. Such is the essence of all spiritual teaching, no matter whether it comes from India or from the heart of the religion to which the name of Christ is attached. Truth is one; and whenever a person begins to practice religion, he comes to know the truth.

In India we think and speak of different types of souls. Sri Ramakrishna, the great master, proved in his life every truth which he practiced by experiencing it. He explains the various classes of human beings who come to earth. One type — the least common — is already free. But how? Because they know the truth. Christ was such a one. He was not born in order to learn any lesson or break any bondage for himself. Instead, he came to earth to teach man how he may break his bondage and shatter his ignorance, how he may go beyond attachment and delusion and thus become free. So we call these rare ones our saviours.

Then there is a second type born with some inkling of the truth. From their very childhood these souls give themselves to the gaining of freedom. They are the aspirants, the seekers, those who put themselves upon the spiritual path in order to realize their ultimate goal in this life.

The third class of which Sri Ramakrishna speaks comprises the great majority of human beings on different rungs of the ladder of evo-

lution. Everyone has degrees of delusion and ignorance and bondage, established by his state of consciousness. We are as bound as we feel that we are; we are as free as we feel. This is determined by what we know and how we meet life.

Even the greatest of souls come into life subject to nature. But they live within these bounds with clear, pure consciousness. They are the ideals for us; their state of being is one which all human beings will eventually achieve. So we should not be either frightened or discouraged, putting ourself in the corner saying there is no hope for us, we are doomed. No soul is ever doomed; and according to our teaching, no soul is ever lost. It can go astray; it can make mistakes; and these very experiences will teach the soul the lessons which it must learn. Then it will return to the path which leads to the final goal.

See how very optimistic and encouraging this is? If we think that there is no salvation, no hope for us because we are not worthy or are not born with certain good fortune, we are accepting a misconception that we must renounce. We are to take ourselves on the basis of our true worth as a soul. And if we find ourselves, at this stage of evolution, struggling, suffering souls, let us remember that we shall move from truth to truth, from light to light, from strength to more strength. Swami Vivekananda has said that it is not from error to truth we go, but from lesser truth to greater truth; it is not from darkness to light, but from lesser light to more

abundant light. This is what we must remember.

We possess the soul within us. If we are in a state of ignorance, the time will come when we shall no longer be in a state of ignorance. If we are bound now, we must know that someday we shall be free. Therefore, exercise the teaching you have; practice the principles of it; convince yourself of what is true, what is real. Then you will have nothing to fear. You will know that liberation or salvation is not some far-off goal. In the winking of an eye, in the flash of a moment, you may become enlightened. We do not know when or how it will suddenly come. Our part is to be true to that inner life, to put into practice the spiritual instructions given to us in order to realize the goal; and the final result will ensue of itself.

He who disdains sense objects is unattached, he who craves for sense pleasures suffers attachment, but he who neither rejects nor accepts is neither attached nor unattached.

The notion of desire and aversion is born of lack of true discrimination. The root and branch of the tree of phenomenal existence is dependent on these two.

Activity begets attachment, renunciation gives birth to aversion, but the wise man lives like a child, free from the pairs of opposites.

One who is attached to the world desires to renounce it in order to avoid suffering, but the sage who has no attachment does not suffer even in the world. —*Ashtavakra Gita*

LIKE A CHILD

*from The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna**

Sri Ramakrishna was sitting in Balaram Bose's house in Calcutta. Near him were Ram, Balaram, Balaram's father, M, Manomohan, and several young devotees.

Sri Ramakrishna went to the porch for a few minutes and then returned. As he was going out, Vishvamvhar's daughter, six or seven years old, saluted him. On returning to the room, the Master began talking to the little girl and her companions, who were of the same age.

THE CHILD (*to the Master*): "I saluted you and you didn't even notice it."

MASTER (*smiling*): "Did you? I really didn't notice."

CHILD: "Then wait. I want to salute you again — the other foot too."

Sri Ramakrishna laughed and sat down. He returned the salute and bowed to the child, touching the ground with his forehead. He asked her to sing. The child said, "I swear I don't sing." When the Master pressed her again, she said, "Should you press me when I said 'I swear'?" The Master was very happy with the children and sang light songs to entertain them.

He sang:

> "Come, let me braid your hair,
> Lest your husband should scold you
> When he beholds you!"

The children and the devotees laughed.

* Translated by Swami Nikhilananda

MASTER (*to the devotees*): "The paramahamsa is like a five-year-old child. He sees everything filled with Consciousness. At one time I was staying at Kamarpukur when Shivaram [his nephew] was four or five years old. One day he was trying to catch grasshoppers near the pond. The leaves were moving. To stop their rustling he said to the leaves: 'Hush! Hush! I want to catch a grasshopper.' Another day it was stormy. It rained hard. Shivaram was with me inside the house. There were flashes of lightning. He wanted to open the door and go out. I scolded him and stopped him, but still he peeped out now and then. When he saw the lightning he exclaimed, 'There, uncle! They are striking matches again!'

"The paramahamsa is like a child. He cannot distinguish between a stranger and a relative. He isn't particular about worldly relationships.

"Sometimes the paramahamsa behaves like a madman. A few days after the dedication of the temple at Dakshineswar, a madman came there who was really a sage endowed with the knowledge of Brahman. He had a bamboo twig in one hand and a potted mango-plant in the other, and was wearing torn shoes. He didn't follow any social conventions. After bathing in the Ganges he didn't perform any religious rites. He ate something that he carried in a corner of his wearing-cloth. Then he entered the Kali temple and chanted hymns to the Deity. The temple seemed to tremble. Haladhari was then in the shrine. The madman wasn't allowed to eat at the guest-house, but he paid no attention to this

slight. He searched for food in the rubbish heap where the dogs were eating crumbs from the discarded leaf-plates. Now and then he pushed the dogs aside to get his crumbs. They didn't mind either. Haladhari followed him and asked: 'Who are you? Are you a perfect knower of Brahman?' The madman whispered, 'Sh! Yes, I am a perfect knower of Brahman.' My heart began to palpitate as Haladhari told me about it. I clung to Hriday. I said to the Divine Mother, 'Mother, shall I too have to pass through such a state?' We all went to see the man. He spoke words of great wisdom to us but behaved like a madman before others. Haladhari followed him a great way when he left the garden. After passing the gate he said to Haladhari: 'What else shall I say to you? When you no longer make any distinction between the water of this pool and the water of the Ganges, then you may know that you have Perfect Knowledge.' Saying this he walked rapidly away."

Sri Ramakrishna began to talk with M. Other devotees, too, were present.

MASTER (*to M*): "How do you feel about Shashadhar?"

M: "He is very nice."

MASTER: "According to the Gita there is a power of God in one who is respected and honored by many. But Shashadhar has still a few things to accomplish. What will he gain with mere scholarship? He needs to practice some austerity. It is necessary to practice some spiritual discipline.

"The worldy minded practice devotions, japa and austerity only by fits and starts. But those who know nothing else but God repeat His name with every breath. Some always repeat mentally, 'Om Rama.' Even the followers of the path of knowledge repeat, 'Soham,' 'I am He.' There are others whose tongues are always moving, repeating God's name. One should remember and think of God constantly."

Pundit Shashadhar entered the room with one or two friends and saluted the Master.

MASTER (*smiling*): "We are like the bridesmaids waiting near the bed for the arrival of the groom."

The pundit laughed. The room was filled with devotees, among them Dr. Pratap and Balaram's father. The Master continued his talk.

MASTER (*to Shashadhar*): "The first sign of knowledge is a peaceful nature, and the second is absence of egotism. You have both. There are other indications of a jnani. He shows intense dispassion in the presence of a sadhu, is a lion when at work, for instance, when he lectures, and is full of wit before his wife. (*All laugh.*)

"But the nature of the vijnani is quite different, as was the case with Chaitanyadeva. He acts like a child or a madman or an inert creature or a ghoul. While in the mood of a child, he sometimes shows childlike guilessness, sometimes the frivolity of adolescence, and sometimes, while instructing others, the strength of a young man."

All sat in silence. Again the Master spoke, addressing the pundit.

MASTER: "Formerly many great men used to come here."

SHASHADHAR: "You mean rich people?"

MASTER: "No. Great scholars."

SHASHADHAR (*humbly*): "Sir, please tell us what kind of yearning gives one the vision of God."

MASTER: "Once a guru said to his disciple: 'Come with me. I shall show you what kind of longing will enable you to see God.' Saying this, he took the disciple to a pond and pressed his head under the water. After a few minutes he released the disciple and asked, 'How did you feel?' The disciple answered: 'Oh, I felt as if I were dying! I was longing for a breath of air.' "

SHASHADHAR: "Yes! Yes! That's it. I understand it now."

MASTER: "To love God is the whole thing. Bhakti alone is the essence. Narada said to Rama, 'May I always have pure love for Your Lotus Feet, and may I not be deluded by Your world-bewitching maya!' Rama said to him, 'Ask for some other boon.' 'No,' said Narada, 'I don't want anything else. May I have love for Your Lotus Feet. This is my only prayer.' "

It was dusk. Sri Ramakrishna began to chant the names of the Divine Mother, Krishna, Rama, and Hari. The devotees sat in silence. The Master chanted the names in such sweet tones that the hearts of the devotees were deeply touched.

THE PATH OF THE SPIRIT

*by Swami Paramananda**

Giving up all thoughts of pleasure and pain, gain or loss, worship God day and night, not a moment is to be lost in vain.

Harmlessness, truthfulness, purity, mercy and godliness are always to be kept.

Giving up all other thoughts, the whole mind, day and night, worships God. Thus being worshipped day and night, He reveals Himself and makes His worshippers feel Him.

—NARADA-BHAKTI-SUTRAS

Realization of the Supreme is the goal and we are all going towards that goal. But as we follow the path, we are too often led away by temptations and stop to enjoy this or that; so we lose time. Those, however, who have true devotion and discrimination, walk steadily onward and never stop until they reach the goal.

Until we go to our real home with the Divine Mother we are not safe. This universe is very dangerous. We may think we are safe, but how often are we carried away by our senses and follow them blindly. Whole-hearted devotion to the Ideal is most necessary if we would avoid the dangers in the path. By living the life we get certain powers. If we pay attention to these and turn our thoughts away from the Ideal, that is like stopping by the wayside and we may not reach the goal. But the true disciple will not stop. He knows that he must go home without

---

* From his, *The Way of Peace and Blessedness,* revised for the 4th edition to appear in 1961.

delay, otherwise he may be overtaken by storm, or evening may come and hide the way.

Under no circumstances must we sacrifice the spiritual life. It can be lived silently, more silently than any other kind of life. No one need know what we think of our Ideal; as Sri Ramakrishna used to sing:

"O my Soul! do thou clasp to thy heart my
Beloved Mother.
Let thou and me alone have the privilege
of looking on Her;
Let Her be seen by none else, by none else!"

which means that the spiritual life need not be lived with any noise or with any outward show. It can all be kept hidden in the heart.

* * *

As a lamp does not burn without oil, so man cannot live without God. Like unto a miser that longeth after gold, let thy heart pant after Him. Verily, I say unto thee, who longs for Him, finds Him. Go and verify this in thine own life; try for three consecutive days with genuine earnestness and thou art sure to succeed.

—Sri Ramakrishna

The path of the spirit is so simple that a child can walk it; but grown-up people, who have complicated minds, for them the path is as sharp as the blade of a razor. The simple-minded are ever protected by the Divine Mother and She creates such an atmosphere about them that nothing can touch them. Everyone can acquire this atmosphere. Whatever you really want, you can gain. The power is within you. But you

cannot do it if you take the egotistic point of view. If, however, you surrender to Divine Mother and pray to Her with whole-hearted devotion, then nothing can prevent you from moving onward. You are sure to attain.

What you want is the living quality in the spiritual life. You must be spiritually living before you can enjoy life. You must know what life is. You must have a full consciousness of its meaning and purpose, so that even when things go wrong you will be able to stand up and face the difficulty like a true child of God. You must go round and round your being. You must penetrate into every corner with the light of wisdom so that nothing is hidden from you. You must arise, awake and shake off all lethargy.

Then when you begin to live, everything will begin to live for you. As long as you are spiritually dead, as long as your heart is deadened by thinking constantly of matter, everything must seem dead to you. But as soon as you are living, living things will come to you. Whenever the soil is ready, the seed comes; so when your heart is properly prepared and ready to receive the living seed, the life-giving force, then it will surely come. You cannot expect someone else to give you a beautiful vision of blessedness. He might do it, but you could not keep it. You must prepare the field by earnestness, humility, child-like simplicity and faith.

You must also yourself long for the spiritual life. You must attune your whole being to spiritual things. You must feel the thirst of the soul

and try to satisfy it. Whatever uplifts your heart and thought, you must strive to make that a part of your being. Then you must practice purity, you must practice perseverance and you must practice meditation. If you practice these steadily, they will become second nature to you. Those who have the habit of spiritual practice, they cannot do without it. They starve if they do not have it.

Just as restless and eager as we are now on the physical plane, so restless and eager must we be on the spiritual plane. We make so much sacrifice for what is ephemeral, why should we not make a little sacrifice for what is eternal? We are ready to do so much for this body. Should we not do as much for our soul?

He who makes his first and last thought God, he lives in God. He who makes his first and last thought flesh, what becomes of him? He will be buried deeper and deeper in matter. All who are born must die. Death is inevitable. But there are some who die for the sake of this body; let us not follow in their footsteps. There are others who die for the sake of God; let us follow them. It is through His presence alone that the soul finds its satisfaction. The hunger and thirst of the soul none else can satisfy. Only when it stands face to face with the Supreme, then alone is it freed from all imperfections and for the first time tastes true happiness.

We must, however, take care of this body, because it is a shrine, a temple of God. So it must be preserved, but not for the sake of itself. And

a light must be kept burning in that shrine. When through meditation we have kindled the soul-nature within us, then the light will come.

* * *

Fill thy mind with Me, be thou My devotee, worship Me and bow down to Me; thus steadfastly uniting thy heart with Me alone and regarding Me as thy Supreme Goal, thou shalt come unto Me.

—BHAGAVAD-GITA

The spiritual life requires great concentration, for it is concentration that creates the right atmosphere. If you hold hateful or evil thoughts, you create an evil atmosphere; similarly, when your mind is fixed on holy things, even if you are not trying to create a holy atmosphere, you do create it and others feel it. Whenever you gather all your heart and soul together to accomplish anything, it is accomplished. You surround yourself with an atmosphere of that, your internal and external nature become attuned to the Source of all things and you cannot fail to succeed.

But this can only be done when you have full possession of your mind. Few people really possess a whole mind. They have only fragments. Their mind does not belong to them; it is claimed by so many things. They have no control over it. Those, however, who are able to offer themselves wholly to the Supreme Ideal, they have complete possession of their mind. Mind is a power. When it constantly thinks of the phenomenal world and divides itself in

pieces, it is never strong. But when you are able to control it, when you can take and place it where you will, then it belongs to you, you possess it and you can use it to attain your freedom. Great souls have absolute mastery over their minds, so they can give them wholly to God. What they have done, you can do.

The Bhagavad-Gita says: "The well-resolved mind is single and one-pointed." So it is with a seeker of Truth. He thinks of nothing else. He moves in that, he lives in that, his whole being is based on that, and he becomes that. You may ask: What happens to his ordinary life? Does a wise man eat, sleep, work? Yes; he eats, sleeps and performs all his functions, but he knows that his soul is immortal and he lives with that consciousness. An ordinary mortal recognizes disease, bondage, suffering; but one who has soul-consciousness, he does not recognize these; he recognizes God. He lives like other men; but he is free, while the other is bound. You may put him in a dark dungeon, there he finds an effulgent light within himself. You cannot rob him of his light. You do not need to help him, he finds all his help in the Supreme. You say the most condemning things, they do not touch him.

Who is the stronger? The one who is not touched. He lives in an atmosphere through which no one can break. He lives on an island so isolated, no one can reach him. He dwells in a state which can never be disturbed. His inner consciousness is peace and that inner bliss he

possesses is his own. You may have a beautiful room, decorate it with flowers and do everything to have peace there; but it is not so safe as when you have peace and bliss within yourself. You may have to leave that special place; but the inner shrine you can carry with you wherever you go. That sanctuary which you create within yourself by your thoughts, words and actions, nothing can take away.

* * *

That Brahman is bliss itself; on attaining this, the soul feels happy.

—Taittiriya-Upanishad

There are also living shrines, there are living gods. But they are not fixed in one spot. No; they encircle a vaster region. They have created such an atmosphere of purity and peace that their every word, their every thought, their very existence brings peace and blessedness. They carry the atmosphere of God wherever they go and people find blessing just from their presence. Nor are these isolated exceptions. What they have done, you can do and everyone can do. The wise who know, who have realized these things for themselves, they say it can be done. There is not a mortal so defective in his spiritual possibilities, not one so poor in his spiritual power, that he cannot do this.

A true teacher is like a fountain that goes on and on, and people come with little tumblers, pitchers, pails, but they can never exhaust the fountain; God's power is inexhaustible. Lecturing and talking, however, are the smallest part

of his work. The main thing is to sow the seed. Those who are ready feel the living quality of it just from the presence without words. Words express very little, but the spirit is felt in the core of the heart.

The company of holy and pure souls is the greatest help in the spiritual life. They alone can give you true rest and courage if you grow weary on the way. The real saints, the unselfish, pure characters are like the spring. As at the touch of spring new life comes to all things, so these teachers, wherever they go, carry the atmosphere of purity and holiness and bring new life and strength. Having themselves crossed the ocean of Samsara or worldliness, they help others to cross it, without thought of receiving any return, but just because they love to do good. A saintly character, one who lives here for the sake of others, radiates everywhere cheerfulness, light and blessing.

Those who keep their life pure, who live in pure thought, they are always cheerful. The sign of spiritual progress is cheerfulness. A man who is truly spiritual is always full of bliss. When we begin to feel this, we may know that we are advancing. Whoever finds his light within is ever blissful.

From Me, as from a living fountain, the small and the great, the poor and the rich, do draw the water of life; and they that willingly and freely serve Me, shall receive grace for grace.

—Imitation of Christ

LIFE'S ETERNAL SONG

by Sister Daya

Man has a right to the pursuit of happiness. Time and time again we are told that happiness is the goal of human existence and without it life becomes not only more difficult, but often unbearable. There must be joy in our hearts in order that we may face obstacles and rise above all the conditions that try to make us bend our faces toward the dust. However, though one may look for happiness in the four corners of the earth, it will never be found in the world of material things. Those who have an inclination for higher pursuits know that the chance and pleasurable happenings of life are not enough to fulfill them. There will always be something else needed to make life complete.

As we grow and aspire toward spiritual living, we begin to realize how many gradations of happiness there are. What we ordinarily term happiness comes through the play of circumstance and is brittle and impermanent. It is not to be compared with that which is called bliss by the world's great religions. Bliss is the joy of realizing one's true being. The pleasure of the moment is a very superficial thing, bearing little relationship to that deep bliss welling up from the depths of the heart. It brings to the countenance a radiancy that never can be clouded by the troubles of the moment, nor touched by the afflictions that so often make people bitter antagonists and frustrated human beings. No disturbance or misery can have any

effect on a consciousness which is fed by the perennial spring that rises at the very base of life itself. It is this happiness alone that can satisfy human hunger.

We are such beggars, taking only little crumbs from the table of life and thinking we are being given all that we deserve, when actually there is no limit to the good we can receive. As we grow in love, understanding, and a sense of fellowship with all living creatures, surely we reap the results of such growth. Bliss would be the normal condition of a human being if he did not divide himself but remained in his true state — in That "I", the Holy, the Whole — which is unity with the great Being, hence, with all other beings as well.

When we are constantly in the atmosphere of bliss, joy is no longer a thing to be pursued. Neither is it something to be encountered accidentally or experienced only for the moment. It is as native as the air we breathe. We cannot touch that higher consciousness without being imbued with bliss. It is impossible for anyone to awaken to this realization and still remain bitter, disgruntled or miserable. One does not sit in the warmth of the summer sun and feel the cold of winter. The two simply do not blend together. In the movement toward God there is the sense of absolute joy and bliss which is a part of our divine heritage, and when we feel it we know that we have touched the song of life.

Nature is rich in the hints she gives us of the true state of man's being. One may look

toward the rolling sea and up at the bright stars, or gaze at a sunset on the horizon and thrill to earth's loveliness and the wonders of creation. All of nature gives us a foretaste of what lies ahead and makes us aware of the immensity of the spirit within.

The beauty, which is the expression of nature's laws, is only an indication of what should come to man naturally as long as he does not interfere with it in his own being. Too often we think of ourselves as outside of life, when we are, in fact, very much a part of life's harmony. There should be in us awareness of the sunsets, the coming of flowers in spring, the songs of birds and grace and music everywhere—all a part of that great symphony of life which is continually playing. We cannot look at nature for long and not become aware of her loveliness and harmonious activity. Laying our hand upon the warm earth, we forget our cares; watching a bird building her nest, we feel our fears drop from us.

Religion, the arts, and all that man has devised as aesthetic activities are for the purpose of opening a path to the natural. If we can engage in them, not permitting the ego with its calculations to hinder, we can move fearlessly and freely, and are borne ultimately to realization of God. Our spiritual practices rid us of the encrustations of our little minds and hearts and help us to return to a state of simplicity and balance. Through them we learn that we must step aside and allow the Supreme to work in us.

When we begin to view life from a higher angle, as a river moving on, flowing from the heart of the Divine, and we see ourselves as streams from that river, we commence to yield ourselves to that One, surrendering our self-will to It. We are no longer afraid to flow in the great movement of life. It is then we find that our problems melt away and the knots in the skein of our existence become untangled. Hatreds give way before love, panic is replaced with courage, and all the complications of our outer life disappear before the sunshine that is released in our hearts. We become aligned and affiliated with the beating Heart of the universe and are carried forward with the current.

Such surrender does not mean, however, that we do not act or make decisions. Sometimes we are forced to make very difficult decisions, but we make them not from the standpoint of our ego, nor out of harshness or rancor, but in accordance with divine rhythm — leaving the results in the hands of the Supreme. This is how the seers and sages accomplish their ends without apparent effort. With them it is the natural act of their being. They do not continually struggle and fight against people and circumstances. Instead with a surging of love in their hearts and the naturalness of the first spring they brush away the obstacles on their path the way the sun melts the hard ice on rivers and lakes. Realization of what life is — its deathlessness, its unity — brings them such power that they pass serenely through all impediments, danger and darkness.

As the sun moves through the heavens and seasons rotate in their appointed course, so is man made to live on earth. He is here to sing life's eternal song, and to carry in his heart its melody even amidst trials and difficulties. Great men never look into outer conditions for the cause of their happiness or misery. That is where they differ from most of us. We are still children spiritually, and affected by the circumstances and events in the world — happy when things are right; unhappy when they are wrong. Until we can retain the inner joy through all, adverse as well as pleasant happenings, we have not yet touched the Reality.

Too often we are caught in the outward rush; too much we go toward the pleasures outside, forgetting the pursuit of our inner life. It is then, that we feel the weight on our hearts, a heaviness and despondency as if our nourishment has been withdrawn. We can no longer sing life's song. If we are able to realize what is happening to us and stop, even for a moment, shutting out everything, remembering that our existence is in That and That alone, wonderful help comes to us. As we learn to give ourselves to the Supreme and feel its sustaining, enfolding, uplifting power we become renewed. Nothing else can give such a lightness and sense of joy.

The man who possesses the true Treasure is very happy even though alone on a desert island. Walking along the streets, however, or riding on a bus or streetcar, how many faces do we see

that carry that shining quality of a light burning within? So very few! How completely man misses his own share of happiness by dependency on others and reliance on things and possessions. We are so far from that consciousness that we cannot conceive of it except as merely words.

Christ received his great illumination when he went away by himself, far from the haunts of men. We, too, must go apart if we want that inner vision. Again and again, we will have to be alone and make contact within. Let us not forget that we must play our part in finding happiness, that happiness is in our own keeping. Not only do we have to draw it from the perennial Spring but, also, we need to make it a habit in our daily life. We must continue to turn within, lifting ourselves out of the ever-involving concerns and activities of outer life. Over and over, we must bring about that serenity of heart which is ours only as a result of inner communion.

Inward bliss never comes as long as our hearts are filled with hate, bitterness, anger or egotism. Egotism has been spoken of by some as "the dweller on the threshold!" It is really our self in its most rapacious and circumscribed form. It brings into our mind all forms of thoughts which poison our atmosphere and affect others. Egotism prevents us from reaching that realm of pure joy, deep peace and illumination. Let us be simple-hearted. It is the world of the ego that makes us so complex. To pass

even a little beyond the world of the ego, is to experience a blissful freedom. However, there are worlds upon worlds of joy and infinite grades of realization as well. We have merely begun to awaken. Unless we are free of hate toward any living creature we cannot love God or have realization of God. Even the least of the unworthy feelings form an insurmountable barrier.

All our wrong reactions and thinking however, are only of the moment. They are like clouds in the sky or passing shadows that fly away before the oncoming winds that sweep over the countryside. The shadows of hatred and jealousy, of annoyance and antagonism are merely clouds — here today and gone tomorrow. Therefore, we can afford to wait patiently, knowing that we have within each one of us, that immaculate Being who is all love, all light, and who like the sun will shine forth in time.

Somehow we must break through the apparently many obstructions and reach that God within us. We must let that life and beauty and peace flow out from our souls. We must never be divorced from our true Self, but instead, come together and be one.

As yet, we may not know our true nature but someday we shall be born in spirit and emerge into the world of the pure One, pulsating with transcendent beauty. Then we will really live but until we attain this we are abiding in a world of separateness. We must know the distinction between the world of God wherein we

are one with the higher Self and that which separates us from It. There is a line which we have to cross over, to let our mind find and taste joy in the contemplation of It. When this becomes a habit we will be carried along even in danger, without losing our grip on life. The one who finds his happiness within is he for whom the outer life sings with joy.

Some are beginning to see the inner light; others are not yet aware of it. For the really dedicated and surrendered one, the spiritual person, it takes so little to fill his cup of joy because he has faith in the divine Power. We should be like the flower that turns its face always toward the sun. When we can at all times keep the sun of Truth shining before us, we shall be able to sing truly life's eternal song.

O child of God! Arise! Awake! Why sleep so long? Sleep no more. He who finds the Limitless, he alone is happy. The great ones tell you that you are the possessor of infinite strength and are sure to overcome all difficulties, that you are sure to realize. Therefore seek the Lord with your whole heart. Never grow discouraged. Never give up. Feel the reality of the spiritual life. Make your call upon God so earnest and sincere that He will hear you and bring within you so clear a vision of the Divine that even in great sorrow you will never forget Him.

Strive and never give up. This is the whole secret of success in the spiritual life.

—*Swami Paramananda*

As long as a man has desires there is no end to his transmigration. It is desires that make him take one body after another. There will be rebirth for a man if he has even the desire to eat a piece of candy.

Everything depends on the mind. Nothing can be achieved without purity of mind. It is in the mind that one feels pure and impure. A man first of all must make his own mind guilty before he can see another man's guilt.

The mind gets purified after hard *tapasya* (austerities). Without regular practice nothing can be attained. Both purity and impurity are in the mind. When a man sees defects in others, his own mind is polluted.

If you want peace of mind, do not find fault with others. Rather see your own faults. Learn to make the whole world your own.

One must not hurt others even by words. One must not even speak an unpleasant truth unnecessarily. By indulging in rude words one's nature becomes rude. One's sensibility is lost if one has not control over one's speech.

Human birth is full of suffering and one has to endure everything patiently by taking the name of God.

None, not even God in human form can escape the suffering of the body and mind. Even Avataras, saints and sages have undergone the ordeal of suffering, for they take upon themselves the burden of the sins of omission and commission of ordinary human beings and there-

by sacrifice themselves for the good of humanity.

No one can suffer all the time. No one will spend all his days on earth in suffering. Every action will bring its own results and one's opportunities accordingly.

. . . earthly ties are transitory. Today they seem to be the be-all and end-all of life and tomorrow they vanish. Your real tie is with God.

Always do your duty to others, but love you must give to God alone. Worldly love always brings in its wake untold misery.

Love of God is the essential thing. One's love of God depends entirely upon one's inner feelings.

Take the name of God with utmost love, sincerity and self-surrender. Before commencing your daily meditation, first think of your utter helplessness in this world and then slowly begin your practice . . . as directed by your guru.

The mind will become steady if one repeats the name of God fifteen or twenty thousand times a day. . . . I myself have experienced it. Let aspirants practice it first, then if they fail, let them complain. As wind removes the cloud, so the name of God destroys the cloud of worldliness.

The goal of life is to realize God and to be always immersed in thoughts of Him.

What does a man obtain by realizing God? Does he develop a pair of horns? No. He gains discrimination between the real and the unreal, he gets spiritual consciousness and passes beyond life and death.

PHILOSOPHY OF SCHWEITZER

by Swami Parampanthi

The philosophy of Albert Schweitzer is based upon his massive humanism and ethical universality. This embraces on one hand all manifestation of life, on the other, the presence of one infinite Being, permeating the whole universe. Schweitzer gives supreme importance to the spirit of service and to the dynamics of ethical commitments directed to the welfare of all life. His philosophy is crystal-clear, presenting a simple, yet profound world-view that combines a lofty idealism with remarkable tenets of humane service.

Schweitzer is convinced that the universe is inexplicably mysterious and full of suffering, that our knowledge of the universe is bound to be limited, and that it is wrong to base any philosophy on world-knowledge alone. He holds that knowledge of the universe plays a limited role in a philosophy of life because man cannot possess at any time a sufficient amount of such knowledge to justify rationally a world-view and detect a world-purpose "at whose service we can place our ethical activity." Man can never solve, once and for all, the total problems of life. nor can he answer all the questions that have vexed him through the ages.

The view that denies the reality of the external universe does not have any place in Schweitzer's philosophy. It has no need to explain its mysteries logically and rationally. Thus, a contemplative philosophy which functions in iso-

lation from the active world, in the realm of meditation and passivity of spirit is free of explanation and rationalization. A world-view that believes man has to realize "spiritual unity with the eternal Being in action as well" is called upon to advance an explanation of the universe.

Facing this situation, the pragmatic philosophy maintains that the universe has a world-spirit which is also creative. It attains to consciousness of itself in human beings who engage themselves in action in unison with the divine world-will. However, this kind of explanation, Schweitzer holds, cannot be sustained, because the world-will remains forever an enigma to us. If we are forced to believe that we must take part in the drama of action which the world-spirit stages for itself, it is impossible to make this drama comprehensible as being meaningful and having ethical value. In other words, according to Schweitzer, ethical action never can be based satisfactorily upon incomplete knowledge of the universe. Under these circumstances he says, ". . . the mysticisms of world-and-life affirmation like that of life-and-world negation is obliged to renounce the knowledge of the universe." Why, one may ask, is it difficult, even almost impossible, to have adequate knowledge of the world? Schweitzer answers, " . . . because it (the world-spirit) runs its course in creation and in devastation, in bringing forth and in destroying life."

The eternal paradox of creation and destruction can never be solved because the contradic-

tions and polarities of life constitute an integral whole, a reality. Therefore, we can only know what can be known and bow in reverence before what is unfathomable. Then, in this seemingly impossible situation, what is left for man to find as a basis for ethical action which will serve and revere life on earth? Again Schweitzer answers, ". . . for us there can be no question of activity in cooperation with the spirit of the universe, but only of devoting ourselves to an activity through which we may experience spiritual union with the spirit."

Thus, Schweitzer's philosophy does not concede it possible to find a rational basis for linking ethical action with divine operation. It is not even necessary to find justification of man's ethical action or spiritual illumination. This understanding comes to man eventually as revelation, releasing him from the impossible effort to establish the world-view on knowledge alone.

However, it is imperative to find meaning and purpose in living, linking oneself with all life, and being united with it in order to acquire spiritual stature. These goals are reached, according to Schweitzer, through a specific form of activity: ethical activity, which enables us to become united with the spirit of all things.

Man possesses the capacity to contact life other than his own; he can destroy or encourage, hamper or promote life on earth. The decision is entirely his; what his action should be in relation to all living things as they stand facing, touching, and influencing his own existence.

Man is a contemplative as well as an active being. He reflects; he also acts in given situations. He must combine spiritual expression with dedication to service in order to further the cause of life.

Thus, in analyzing the nature of life, Schweitzer expounds three basic principles in his ethical philosophy: the concepts of life-and-world affirmation, resignation, and ethical service.

The first is fairly well-known. It directly opposes the concept of life-and-world negation which proposes the doctrine of transcendental reality beyond, denying the reality and intrinsic values of life and the world. According to Schweitzer, all that exists is the manifestation of one infinite Being. Reality is both immanent and transcendent — the universe and life in space and time being as true as the reality beyond. Therefore, in the unity of all beings lies the meaning and purpose of all existence. Nothing can function in sheer isolation; reality is interrelational and interpersonal. The attainment of harmonious relations with one another should be the goal of all individuals.

Thus, it becomes evident that Schweitzer does not visualize any dichotomy between the natural and the spiritual. For all things, spiritual and material stem from the selfsame Reality. There is no insuperable gulf between them. Man exists in the world; therefore, he cannot overlook or bypass that which is natural. Schweitzer says, "All spiritual life meets us within natural life." This means that spiritual values are not merely

transcendent, they are immanent, inherent in the world as well, and in the concrete facts of life. The natural world is permeated with a spiritual essence so that in the final analysis the terms spiritual and natural are interchangeable, being two sides of the same reality. This calls for spiritualization of the material or natural by the expression of its ingrained essence. In other words, concrete, objective reality must be transformed by man into living spirituality. This is done by his gaining unity with all living creatures through service and reverence.

Schweitzer refuses to see the world as merely a totality of events or facts. He holds that the presence of life on earth gives a radically different complexion to creation as a whole. The world not only constitutes a mechanism of matter, it is permeated with life and is significant with spiritual, cosmic meaning. This gives justification to man's existence. He says, "By placing myself in the service of that which lives, I reach an activity exerted upon the world which has meaning and purpose."

The second basic principle in his philosophy is the concept of resignation, to the spirit of which Schweitzer gives tremendous importance. Man, according to him, comes to relate himself spiritually to the world by an act of resignation which he defines as a process of gaining inward freedom from the contingencies of life. He says, "Inward freedom means that he finds strength to deal with everything that is hard in his lot, in such a way that it all helps to keep him calm

and peaceful. Resignation, therefore, is the spiritual and ethical affirmation of one's own existence." It puts iron, as it were, in the heart of man making him immune, strong and unruffled in the face of inevitable, adverse situations. It frees him from the effects of the misfortunes of fate and produces a stoical courage that defies all the vicissitudes of life. Schweitzer adds, "Only he who has gone through the stage of resignation is capable of world affirmation."

The third principle of his philosophy is ethical service. The whole concept at once constitutes a spiritual vision, a goal of life, a mandate for service. Man is inevitably related to his fellow beings. He can by means of his fruitful and self-evolving relationship to other lives, grow both socially and spiritually. Service is the only way at man's disposal to better himself and fulfill his purpose. The mysticism of the spirit has to unite with the ethics of service; then only can the picture of life be complete and meaningful. The entire ethical attitude concerns itself with an integrated world-view and man's harmony with Reality. All ethics must embrace the entire universe in the realization of the unity between living beings and their relation to the infinite Being. Thus ethics are the same as total mysticism and are combined in a single principle, namely, "the maintenance of life at its highest level, and the furtherance of life."

The ethical function of the individual is twofold: maintaining himself at the highest level by becoming gradually perfect in spirit, and main-

taining the highest level in other life by sympathetic, helpful and devoted service to it. Thus Schweitzer lays tremendous emphasis on the moral and spiritual development of the individual. Without this essential process, human beings may easily become mere social workers and reformers with no spiritual evolution. The ethical philosophy of Schweitzer is basic in the concept of the advancement of the life-principle, individually and collectively. He says, "All material and spiritual values are values only in so far as they serve the maintenance of life at its highest level and the furtherance of life. The world-view of reverence for life is ethical mysticism. It allows union with the Infinite to be realized by ethical actions."

His attitude is based primarily upon universal love. God expresses Himself through love; in God the will to live is combined with the will to love. All living things have the biological will to live. This basic urge must be combined with the God-given will to love. Schweitzer, speaking about Christianity says, "The essential element in Christianity . . . is this, that it is only through love that we can attain to communion with God. All living knowledge of God rests upon this foundation: that we experience Him in our lives as well as will to love." It is the submission to love, to service, to union with God that is essential to life's evolvement; we do not need the complete knowledge of the suprasensible:

"In the knowledge of the spiritual existence in God through love he (man) possesses the one thing needful."

FROM AN INDIAN JOURNEY

by Astrid Setterwall Angstrom

Thou art woman; Thou art man; Thou art youth; Thou art maiden; Thou art the old man tottering on his staff; Thou dost appear born in manifold forms.

—SVETASVATAROPANISHAD

We live in a bungalow with a large veranda. One morning when the dew still glitters on grass and leaves and all is breathlessly beautiful I sit there alone. The dark coolie who sweeps the paths glides barefooted toward me in an almost soundless rhythm. He smiles with dazzling teeth and puts a bouquet of one yellow and one violet pensee framed with a geranium leaf in front of me on the table. The bright colors make me happy and I return his smile. I grope for my bag. Probably he needs some money. Maybe he supports his old mother or others who depend on him. But he is already gone! Did he only want another being to rejoice this delightful morning!

The mango trees are in bloom, and other trees with widespread crowns are full of red flowers. They are called the "flame of the forest."

When people begin to stir in the neighboring bungalows I walk out between the trees, passing a big cone-shaped ant hill, toward the wide field where the red earth lies bare in spots in the yellow faded grass. A woman in a deep violet sari walks slowly across the field with a heavy bundle of dry sticks on her head. She carries a

shimmering brass vessel in her hand. Maybe she lives in one of the low cottages in the distance and has collected fuel for her cooking pots on the earthen floor. Her face is very dark. Perhaps she belongs to the original Dravidians who did not fit into the caste system that the Aryans created, and who thus became the untouchables. The smooth cotton material drapes itself in deep folds on her slender body.

Far out in the fields the garment of a beggar-monk glows like a flame. He stands still as if waiting for something. But after a while he puts his staff to the ground and again walks on. The wind blows his clothes tightly around him. Against the strong sunlight his body appears to be reduced to a skeleton. He sits down to rest on a stone wall. As I pass I see that he is an old man, with Siva's sign on his forehead. There is a deep luminosity in his eyes as if light had its abode there. He does not even notice that someone passes.

At the end of the field is situated a small temple with a surrounding garden. It was built only fifty years ago by a wealthy man. Scenes from the great epics, Mahabharata and Ramayana, are carved on the walls and tell in a traditional manner of the different forms of divine life on earth. I feel the strong security in this heritage to which people add the labor of their lives without attaching their own names to it. There does not seem to be any urge to revolt against this tradition but rather to keep it pure and vital. The directions for life here on earth

were laid down by the Vedic seers, the rishis, who through their lives of restraint and purity received knowledge as direct inspiration. But during milleniums this knowledge lost its freshness and sank in the depths many a time until it was renewed by the few who dived for it. In the light of this knowledge, karma—the law of cause and effect—explains life to those who are still on the road.

When I come back to the veranda the monkeys have settled in the trees. They play and entertain each other in a charming way. Some make summersaults in air while others look on admiringly. In the evening—so they say here—they huddle together in the falling darkness whispering to each other, "Poor, poor monkeys! Others have house and home. Only we have nothing. Tomorrow we will start to build." But when morning comes they have forgotten yesterday's troubles and live their careless lives as before—until it is evening. Then they begin again with self-pity, "Poor, poor monkeys . . ." It is this that we hear in the sorrowful moans from the trees when darkness approaches!

It is an enchanted night with all its secret rustle from trees and ground. So living, so fragrant! But I do not think I would like to step down from the veranda now and walk out under the trees again. Who knows how the monkeys would receive me!

* * *

A while ago we had dinner at the English hotel where white-clad waiters with green tur-

bans and expressionless faces slithered on brown bare feet between the tables. It is seldom one is served so well and in such a friendly way as here. But what do they really think about us! A group of Europeans came into the dining room. The ladies tripped along on high, needle-sharp heels with that forward bend that seems so unnatural when the eyes are used to the classic steps of Indian women. Bare feet and a water jug on the head give even the poorest women a noble bearing.

In the hall a young man sells antiquities. Almost everyday he has something new to show. He knows how to explain the symbolism of his gods and goddesses. He has also profane figures to sell, as for example, nutcrackers with slender female figures for their shanks. One must admire the skillful craftsmanship even if some forms do not always appeal to the eyes of a foreigner.

He has wonderful old ivory sculptures. Their beauty has been enhanced by time. The color of the material has deepened to a warm gold. I am holding the flute-playing Krishna in my hands and I am charmed by his grace, his playful movements which though kept within the bounds of its tradition render the fragrance of the divine play. The young man sees my absorbtion and leaves me alone. After a while he addresses me, "You love art!" Astonished that he has understood, I only answer that I do so. "I too am an art lover," he continues, "and I am also a collector. Wait here and I will show you something."

The moment customers are gone he opens a cupboard and takes out a small green bronze figure. It represents a child lying on its back with outstretched arms and legs as if playing or wanting an embrace. It is primitive, simple, whole. With radiant eyes the boy says that it is at least one thousand years old. It is unique. He has never seen anything similar. Neither have I. It is perfectly ravishing. In one way it is realistic, in another not. With utmost care I hold it. All at once I feel that I want it to be mine—my own. Will he let me have it? Could he think of selling it? I know his answer. "I will never, never sell it. It is the baby Krishna. It is the dearest and most exquisite piece in my own collection!" I understand.

But I often go to him in the hall and ask to see it. And I stand there full of joy that I may hold this fascinating, sprawling, divine bronze boy in my hands.

* * *

One day in a bookshop we were drawn into a conversation about books by a man who we believed was the owner. But he was only a man who, like ourselves, loved books. He was enthusiastic and advised us what to read about the India of today. He was a small unassuming man. He invited us to his home for tea in order to continue our talk. As this was impossible for us we suggested he should visit us instead.

Some days later he came to our veranda. He indicated that this was his first visit to Westerners. As he was a brahmin I understood that it

was with a certain degree of self-conquest that he stepped out of his own surroundings.

He walks back and forth, back and forth, between the railing of the veranda and the door to the bungalow, unfolding for us his conviction of India's significance to the world.

We, who ourselves have been drawn here because of our deep interest in the wisdom of the Upanishads and the old culture of India, agree with him. This encourages him so that he drops into an almost ecstatic flow of words. He considers India's task in the world to be to revive the knowledge of Atman which exists within us all but which for the most part lies dormant.

"Two things are characteristic of Indian culture," he proclaims, "tolerance and the search for spiritual Reality. Rigveda says, 'Truth is one. The sages call it by different names.' The Upanishads hold forth that Atman must be experienced. Throughout the ages a number of seekers have proved that this is possible. During five thousand years they have built the culture of India. Men of that kind are given the greatest honors. Such leaders the people of India will follow even today. A speaker may speak ever so well, or a politician may tempt with this or that advantage; but all that is spoken to deaf ears. However, if a man with spiritual attainments addresses them, people will listen in the same way as they have listened to such words throughout the ages. Even today the rishis of old—of whom the Vedas say that they *saw* the truth—are

honored. We trace with pride our ancestry to these beggar-philosophers. Thus there still exists a hidden living flow of knowledge which has been handed down from teacher to disciple.

"Our tradition is unbroken," he continues. "We still live our mythology. The original representations and names of gods and goddesses cover a philosophy that has deepened and become refined through the milleniums."

He stays with us for hours. In his wish to explain to us India's task as he sees it, and compared to those of other nations, his words become imprinted by strong feeling. He brings forth his subject first from one angle, then from another, and finally through refrains of many repetitions he gives a brilliant conclusion.

John Joseph, the dark boy who is our special servant, steps up onto the veranda with refreshments—tea, toast and small tangerines.

Our guest is evidently an orthodox brahmin: He points out that he has not come to eat with us but to talk. Then with a smile he says, "Really, only the one who knows Brahman is a brahmin." And he proceeds to take a cup of tea and a tangerine with us.

He tells us that for generations his family has been devoted to Sankaracharya. With deep emotion he talks about the greatness of Sankara's personality which embraced devotion as well as an extraordinary power of clear thinking.

"The Absolute that Sankara indicates," he says, "is far above the aims of others. The road to attain this Absolute first leads through dual-

ism, but the goal is absolute unity, absolute monism."

* * *

John Joseph is a Christian. One day he asked me to come with him and see his images. In a small room where all the china for the trays he has to carry is stored, he had arranged an altar on a shelf. There were images of Christ and his Mother and Saint Anthony, just as there is in every Hindu home a corner or a room for devotional practices before divine images. If the Mother's name is Mary, Durga, Sarada or Chamundi does not matter. It is the same Mother who is worshipped as the Highest all over India. Jesus Christ is one of the avatars who came down on earth to redeem men.

John Joseph knows that his friend who sits on the doorstep in the evening and sings to Rama and his other friend who brings offerings to the Siva temple are heading for the same goal. In India all manifestations of God are revered.

To such a man . . . all manner of communication between God and his soul begins after a time to grow so transparent that the rays and gleams of the divine sun reach him without ceasing — that is, as often as he turns himself towards them in feeling and in thought . . . and in its light all the man's ways, and works, and doings, are so changed into His image, that he feels nothing to be so true as God, with a certainty that is rooted in the very midst of his being. *—John Tauler*

JESUS AND NANAK

*by Charles S. Braden**

Latest born of the great founders of religion was Nanak, who founded the Sikh faith. He was a contemporary of Martin Luther, born in 1470, and died in 1540 A.D. The faith he founded was the fourth of the world religions to take form in India. It is small in comparison with the other great ethnic faiths, and has no appreciable following outside of India itself. All told, it numbers only about six million followers—less than some of the larger Christian denominations in the United States. On the basis of numbers, the Bahai faith, for example, might with equal right be considered one of the great religions, and on the basis of its world-wide spread, much more so, for the Sikh faith has made no effort to propagate itself outside of India and is to be found, apart from India, only where Sikhs have gone as immigrants. I recall seeing a Sikh temple, for example, in Singapore. Yet the Sikh faith is customarily rated as one of the eleven world religions. Actually, some regard it as only one of the many Hindu reform movements . . . But the Sikhs themselves will not have it so. They have always insisted in disassociating themselves from Hinduism, in the Indian Census, as a separate and distinct faith.

Since many pepole have little or no idea of who the Sikhs are, let me say simply that they are the result, in organized form, of the fusion of aspects of the Hindu and Moslem faiths

* From his book, *Jesus Compared,* c.1957, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N. J.

which occurred after the Moslem invasion of India. It has in it elements of both religions, yet it is a new synthesis of those elements which is neither Hindu nor Moslem now. This, it may be said, is the way Christianity came into being as an organized system of worship, thought, and life: it is a blending of Hebrew, Greek and Roman elments, with some things added from other cultures which it has touched in its world-wide spread.

The Sikh faith takes over Islamic monotheism, but with distinct Hindu overtones. It is decidedly non-idolatrous, and it has had about it something of the Moslem militancy which made it a once powerful Indian state. But there is in it much of Hindu bhakti, or devotion, and Hindu mysticism. No longer a state, there is still among the Sikhs a strong party which urges Sikh nationalism and would seek a further partition of India and the setting up of a Sikh state as well as Hindu and Moslem states.

Nanak was the founder of this modern Indian faith. What was he like—what did he teach? How was he like Jesus, and how did he and Jesus differ? How have his later followers thought of him?

Since we are much closer in time to Nanak than to any of the other founders, the sources which tell of his life and the movement that he started are more abundant than for the others. The Sikh scriptures, known as the Granth, tell very little about him factually, for they consist almost entirely of songs and poems and aphor-

isms not only of Nanak himself, but of several of the other successor Gurus, and a number of other poets, including the great Kabir, who significantly influenced the Sikh founder. But if the scripture which is called the Adi Granth contributes little of a factual nature, it does contain a great number of songs and poems written by Nanak which clearly set forth his ideas and reveal his general outlook and spirit. One writer, Macauliffe, has translated the whole and, instead of presenting merely the translation in order as found in the original, has attempted to provide the appropriate setting for the songs, providing thus a kind of running story of his life and activity as well as his sayings. But this, it should be said, is one man's reconstruction of the life, which may or may not be entirely correct in every detail. It is certainly from his songs that we shall attempt to set forth his ideas and religious attitudes.

In addition, there are biographies from a fairly early time which attempt to tell the story of his life, but that they contain a good deal that is legendary must now be admitted. And, of course, there is a considerable mass of legendary lore about him which circulates among the people. None of this is canonical, however.

The Granth is almost worshipped at the golden temple at Amritsar, headquarters of the Movement. All day long, every day, it rests on a dais in the temple, covered with rich brocaded silks, and thousands of Sikhs honor it. I saw considerable quantities of money—mostly coins

—which had been left before it on the floor. At night it is carried across the causeway from the temple, in the middle of a lagoon, to the shore, where it is locked in a great safe. In the morning, it is carried again to the temple and properly draped with its coverings. It is the central object of the temple. Upstairs in another room sits a man reading aloud from the sacred text. He is replaced at intervals by another, and this reading goes on day and night throughout the entire day—all the year through. It is thus constantly being read, from the first page to the last, consecutively year after year. How long this has gone on I do not know, but there is an endowment, I was told, to perpetuate the reading indefinitely.

That there is a firm historical basis for Nanak as founder of the movement there can be no doubt, although where fact ends and legend begins is not always clear.

On the basis of these sources, how are Jesus and Nanak alike, and how do they differ?

Although Nanak has been claimed by both Moslems and Hindus, the overwhelming evidence points to predominantly Hindu ancestry, and to the fact that he, like Jesus, came of humble origin. He was born near Lahore, in the Punjab, in a village later known as Rayapur, in 1469 or 1470.

Both in Islam and in Hinduism, there was a belief that there was one to come, somewhat as the Jews believed in a Messiah. In the case of the Shiah Moslems, it was a belief in an Imam,

who had disappeared and would one day return again. In the case of the Hindus, there was the belief in an avatar, or incarnation of Vishnu, who was yet to come. It was easy for later Sikhs to see in these prophecies of one to come a foreshadowing of the coming of their great leader Nanak, just as Moslems today attempt to fit Mohammed into Biblical prophecies.

His birth was attended by unusual portents. Strange sounds were heard. The midwife recognized an unusual quality in the child's voice. A great company of ascetics, holy men, and "devas," to the number of three hundred and thirty million, came to pay him honor and to witness that "a great saint had come to save the world." An astrologer, called to prepare the child's horoscope, worshipped him and predicted that he would be worshipped by both Hindus and Moslems, and would himself worship but one God. This reminiscent of the case of Simeon at the presentation of Jesus in the temple, and of the holy man Asita who came a long distance to see the newborn Buddha and sang of his future greatness. . . .

The child was, as in Buddha's case, very precocious. At five years of age, he began to talk of profound religious subjects. At seven he amazed his teachers by making an acrostic based upon the alphabet.

He was educated after the manner of his day for one of his class, and thus came to know something of the scriptures of both Hinduism and Islam. When at nine years of age he went

through the initiation into the "twice born," and was invested with the sacred thread, legend has it that he grasped it in his hand and uttered this verse:

"Make mercy thy cotton, contentment the twisted thread, and continence the knot.
And thus make a 'thread' for thy soul . . .
A man dies, the thread is broken and his spirit departs without it . . .
By praise and adoration of the Name comes honor and the true 'thread'
Which does not break, but lingers for man's entrance into the court of God."

Jesus and Nanak are alike in that both believed in the Oneness of God. The *Mool Mantra,* the opening sentences of the *Japji,* or Psalms of Nanak, proclaim . . . He is the "True one," the "formless One;" He is Lord. He is truth.

And although there are occasional sayings that might be interpreted as reflecting the idea of God as impersonal or as a kind of pantheistic world soul, such as the Hindu Brahman, the overwhelming emphasis is upon God as personal. . . .

In general, Nanak seems to advocate the way of faith or devotion—*bhakti marga* as the preferred way of salvation. Nanak seems definitely to have been influenced in this idea by the preachers of Hindu bhakti, of whom there were many in his time. Not only in Nanak, but in the writings of the other Gurus and poets included in the Adi Granth, the element of grace is emphasized.

Both Jesus and Nanak were given to frequent periods of communion with God, although neither retired permanently from the active work of the world nor recommended it.

Both were impatient with ritual requirement when it was exalted to a place of primacy.

Jesus and Nanak were alike in that their message was for no special class or people. "Come unto me *all* ye that labor and are heavy laden," said Jesus. Nanak, in the midst of a people where rigid caste distinctions separated men and raised formidable bars to fellowship across class lines, paid no attention to such lines, and welcomed men of every class into the company of his followers. . . .

In these ways Jesus and Nanak are alike. How do they differ? While they believe in the oneness and the moral nature of God, and that he is personal, there are, as already indicated, overtones of pantheism in the teaching of Nanak. Possibly it is only an assertion of a more highly immanentist conception than that entertained by Jesus. Coming out of the Hindu background, as Nanak did, rather than that of a Hebrew monotheism, his thought would quite naturally exhibit this feature. Moslem Sufism may also have made its contribution here. That Jesus thought of God as intimately related to man and nature is indicated in such sayings as "Consider the lilies of the field," "No sparrow that falls to the ground but God knows of it," "The very little hairs of your head are numbered," and "How much more will he clothe

you, O ye of little faith?" But the Christian God seems always to be outside of nature and man, over against them, controlling them, loving them, caring for them, effecting his puposes through them. Nanak is willing even to call God by the names employed among Hindus and Moslems—Brahman, Hari, Rama, even Allah....

Nanak shares with Hinduism his belief in the round of rebirth, and the idea that salvation, as in Hinduism, lies in escape from this rebirth. The old Hindu principle of Karma, or the law of the deed, is for him also that which keeps men on the wheel of birth. Although Jesus may say, "By their fruits ye shall know them," and does insist upon retribution for those who deliberately choose the evil way, there is no continuing round of birth.

As to what is meant by salvation ultimately, Nanak looked for the absorption of individual being into the being of God. This was part of his Hindu heritage.

Jesus speaks often in the Gospels of heaven and hell; little is said of these by Nanak. In the Granth as a whole, there are occasional references to hell.

But in the context of Hinduism this is not eternal; rather, it is a stage in the transmigration of the soul, out of which it may be reborn, to continue its round of birth. . . . The essential difference is the apparent continuity of individual existence in Jesus' thought, as over against the loss of individuality in the being of God, as held, apparently, by Nanak.

While in the case of both Jesus and Nanak salvation is, or may be, by faith or devotion, both regard good works as an evidence of that devotion. Nanak makes high moral demands upon his followers. . . .

In other superficial ways also they differ. Nanak was married and had a family. Nanak's ministry stretched over many years, in contrast to the short period of Jesus' active public life. Jesus was accompanied on his preaching tours by a group of disciples; Nanak, usually only by Mardana, who played the *rebek* or lute, and one other at times. Nanak was a poet and composed numerous songs. Jesus may have had the heart of a poet, but he wrote no verse.

Nanak apparently never thought of himself as other than a human figure, a poet, a teacher, a leader of men. It is usually held, at least by orthodox Christians, that Jesus regarded himself as divine. . . .

There remains the question as to what his later followers have done to his memory. How have they regarded Nanak?

Well, for one thing, his birthplace is a place of pilgrimage. At first pilgrimages were made usually only on the founder's birthday, in celebration of that event; but in later times, pilgrims came at any time, and now large numbers do homage at the shrine in the place of his birth.

He was thought to stand in a peculiar relation to God, as the Guru who brought salvation to men.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Thanksgiving, the last among the autumn celebrations was observed on November 24 with special services at both Ananda Ashrama, La Crescenta, California and Vedanta Centre, Cohasset, Massachusetts. Due to pressing need, Srimati Gayatri Devi has remained uninterruptedly at the western Ashrama conducting all the Sunday services and the Thursday evening classes, on *Crest Jewel of Discrimination*. Some of the sermon themes were, "Love, Personal and Impersonal," "The One Doer," "Motherhood of God," "Practice of Humility," "Obedience," "Peace is Our Goal," and "Meaning of Tolerance."

Swami Parampanthi has received complete support from Vedanta Centre's congregation and devotees who have come faithfully to the new temple each Sunday to hear him speak and to join in discussion Sunday afternoon. Services were resumed in Boston Chapel beginning December 4.

Sri Sarada Devi or Holy Mother was remembered in honor of her birthday on December 10 by all-day devotional activities. The following morning the Sunday service was also dedicated to her.

At the time of writing this report plans for forthcoming events are being made. In the east and in the west there will be Christmas Eve services as well as New Year's Eve candlelight meditation and worship.

AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT!

In 1961 the *Message of the East* will complete fifty years of uninterrupted publication. We have, to the best of our ability, maintained the magazine adhering to the high ideals to which it was dedicated, to:

(1) Publish exclusively religious and philosophic material, authentic and drawn from undisputed sources of the world's wisdom.

(2) Be true to the Vedantic views as they were interpreted by Sri Ramakrishna and his disciples.

(3) Emphasize the similarity between the lives and teachings of holy persons regardless of country, time, nationality, and religion.

(4) Encourage gifted new writers with philosophic and aspiring minds.

(5) Show equal regard for scholarship and inspiration.

We feel that the "Message" has fulfilled its purpose during its long period of service and that now is the time to begin to consider its discontinuation. Next year we intend to bring out four golden anniversary issues, vital and inspiring in content.

The first number of 1961 will be in circulation in March. Kindly send your subscription at your earliest convenience. Your interest in additional gift subscriptions will be of substantial aid to us.